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THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

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From earliest times, man has communicated with and educated his fellowman by using visual aids. In the beginning he drew pictures, in caves and on walls, and used sand for a blackboard. The old word "communication" is now used in the business world to describe the processing of passing information from the highest executive level to all branches of the business. Modern technical advances have enriched our methods of communication by providing us with such media as the slidefilm, the filmstrip and sound recording. In 1958, this is all "old-hat". Too many of us have not yet, however, discovered the value of the filmstrip in communication.

That filmstrip and slidefilm are useful has been proven over and over again by people who have learned to use them effectively. Effective use includes using them frequently, but not to the point of substituting a routine, lazy method of getting by. The visual presentation does not replace the "human" using it.

Many companies make use of slides for office staff training and sales conferences. The slidefilm is very useful to explain the product. When new and revised forms are prepared, slides are made of them for distribution to the field force. The education officer, or perhaps a branch manager shows a filmstrip to prepare the field force for what is coming. Field forces are great users of visual education in selling. Company heads know this, but do not always realize the value of the same medium in selling the the representatives. Unfortunately, slides are not practical in the field itself. But in the preparation of the field force these aids are very helpful.

Welfare organizations such as the Community Chest make great use of these aids. Picture their situation. The central organization gathers together a group of people from all walks of life who have volunteered to do a kind of job they may never have done before. In a very short time, using filmstrips, slides, etc., they show this group what to do, why, how to do it, and what the results should be - and they get those results.

There is a wealth of material available to labour unions covering every aspect of labor; as public relations, organization, procedures, etc. It is probable that locals could make great use of these aids to their own advantage, material and otherwise. Lack of time makes it difficult for members to study all phases of labor, what is required of them as members, and to attend conventions. It seems apparent that since organizations such as the Community Chest get such quick results using slides for communication, then these same methods would be excellent for a brotherhood. Certainly, members of any organization who understand their responsibilities, duties, and national affiliation, should be better than average members.

While discussing filmstrips under "classroom", we usually think in terms of the elementary school, to a lesser extent the secondary school, and very seldom of the university classroom. Since it has been proven so many times that visual education results in better education (see any study of experiments in this work), why should it not be used in the university classroom? The university teachers do use visual and practical teaching in the science laboratories. Probably the filmstrip is not a very suitable replacement for a practical experiment in the Laboratory. But has anyone given very much thought to using filmstrips and slides for teaching economics, international law, politics, sociology and other reading subjects? It may be that such subjects do not adapt themselves readily to visual interpretation and teaching. However, if someone ever thought about them visually, the result might be a higher standard of performance by the students. There is lots of material on sociology. How much of it is used in universities? There may not be much of a selection in the other subjects. The problem is, then, one of two things. Either the subject matter is not adaptable, or there is no demand. In either case the situation requires study and correction if possible.

There is no doubt that some of the organizations make great use of filmstrips, slidefilms, with or without sound. These organizations sell tangibles, intangibles, teach children, adults, train staff, in short communicate ideas.

Why do they use these media? Here are just a few of the advantages.

You can prepare your speech entirely before going to the meeting. You do not have to carry around a big, big blackboard. You carry a small projector and a small can of film in your pocket. In fifteen minutes you are totally ready. You do not require two hours to put an outline on a blackboard. If you just talk without any visual presentation, the people will leave with 15% of what you TOLD them. With visual presentation, they will leave with 65% of what you SHOWED them. If you use a slide presentation, you can arrange the presentation any way you wish. It is very flexible. However, with a bit of practice, you can quickly flip to a picture you want and back to a previous one. Put a hand in front of the lens, and you won't even cause the assembly any discomfort. By using the right-sized screen you have a "blackboard" of the required size so that everyone can see your speech, whether the assembly is large or small.

By combining the sound recording with the slides or the films, the president of a company can speak directly to the employee in the most remote part of the company's operation. He can explain a change in policy, an employee benefit, or some information pertaining to a new product. The president of a labour union can speak to every local which he will not have time to visit because he is representing the members at some council table. In short, the filmstrip can help in a very real way to bring all parts of an organization very close together as a smooth working team. The cost of communication? It is very low.

The hand-writing is on the wall. Progress, culture, civilization, and even survival requires skill in communication. One of the best methods of communication is putting our handwriting on the wall using a filmstrip.

If you have never tried these aids, or have had only a modest success with them, why not give them a good try to see what is possible? Certainly there is lots of material available in all subjects which would serve to make the experiment. Call your nearest visual aids library.

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THE FOSTER REWIND

Canadian Film Institute has been using a Foster Rewind for the past several months for all of its film inspection services. We have found it to be fast and efficient. Simple to operate with all of the attention of the operator concentrated on checking the film, the Foster Rewind has processed many more films per day than had been customary. In another issue of the Bulletin we'll tell you more about the Foster Rewind giving specifications and Canadian service. In the meantime, if you want further information, write us about it.

INDEX OF FEATURE FILMS

The Canadian Federation of Film Societies, a Division of CFI, announces a Supplement to its 16mm Index of Feature films and long documentaries available in Canada, which was published in 1957. The Supplement contains approximately 600 entries, including new films and French versions which have become available since last year, withdrawals from circulation and corrections to existing entries. For each film there is listed the title (original and translation), the director, year of production, country of origin, length, whether in colour or in black and white, screen aspect ratio, language, whether subtitled or not, the Canadian distributor and the rental. Also included is a list of distributors' addresses and telephone numbers and a list of sources for 16 mm short films. The technical notes on presentation and the abbreviations used are repeated for quick reference. The Supplement is available on request, price $1.00 (8" x 11", 28pp. plastic bound). Copies of the 16mm Index are still available, as are copies of the 35mm Index of Films, price $5.00 each.

NEW FILMS

CASTING FOR SALMON IN NORWAY 12 mins sd. col.
Produced by the National Film Board of Norway - 1957.
The rivers of Western Norway are visited by sportsmen from all over the world seeking the excitement of fishing Atlantic Salmon. Film shows struggle between man and fish, as the fisherman reels in a 35 lb. salmon.

CROWDED OUT 29 mins. sd. b & w 6.00
Produced by the National Education Association.
The story of what happens to children and teachers when schools are overcrowded.

CHAIRY TALE 10 mins. sd. b&w 1.00
Produced by the National Film Board of Canada - 1957.
A fairy tale in the modern manner, told without words by film artist Norman McLaren. The film is a kind of simple ballet, a pas de deux of a youth and a common kitchen chair. The young man tries to sit but the chair declines to be sat upon.

FOUR FIGURE FLIGHT 13 mins. sd. col. 2.30
Produced by United Kingdom Information Services.
Test Pilot Peter Twiss tells the story of his successful attempt to break the world air speed record. Preparations for the flight at the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Boscombe Down - the Fairey Delta II on its record breaking run at over 1100 miles per hour, and a ground run by automobile simulating the tremendous speed attained are some of the highlights of the film. (Also available in French)

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CORRECTION -- In the August Bulletin reference was made to the University of Saskatchewan Film Library at Regina. This should read the University of Saskatchewan at Saskatoon.